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ABSTRACT

Cross-peer tutoring in English as a second language, in which an under-achieving native English-speaking student tutors a limited-English-speaking student, focuses on learning as a cooperative undertaking and addresses both the process and the outcome of learning. In one such project, student tutors were chosen according to their characteristics of using helping behaviors, ability to be well-liked, desire to tutor, completion of their own classwork and recommendation from their regular classroom teacher, skill level above that being taught, and positive attitude toward peer tutoring. Students being tutored must have a willingness to be helped, a desire to grow, and good behavior. The objectives are to improve the shy student's self-image, develop student awareness of individual differences, and develop students' sense of responsibility. Tutor training in methodology and content is an essential program element. Tutors' visibility is increased by special privileges and rewards. Students being tutored benefit by increased individual attention, closer instructor contact resulting in increased learning efficiency, the positive influence of a role model, and increased self-esteem. The tutor benefits include enhanced achievement, increased self-esteem, and enhanced school and social attitudes. In addition, the teacher or resource teacher benefits greatly from the increased attention to individual students. A short list of references concludes the paper. (MSE)

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CROSS-PEER TUTORING FOR SPECIAL READING AND ESL STUDENTS

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This article will: (1) present program goals which include improving the student's self image, developing an awareness of individual differences, creating and understanding positive attitudes, and developing a sense of responsibility; (2) present goals for two populations--the native English-speaking below-grade-level reading student and the NEP/LEP student; and (3) present a model for developing and implementing a cross-peer tutoring program.

"You know, Blue, I spent three days last week on these words with Cathy and she knew them all so well and now this week she acts like she never even heard them. I don't know why I beat my brains out. How's it going with Enrique?"

This conversation was not overheard in a teacher's lounge but in an ESL classroom in Sparks, Nevada. John, the speaker in the above conversation, had been tutoring Cathy in reading readiness in an ESL cross-peer tutoring program for four months. Cathy is a first grade student from the Philippines. John is a native English speaker who is reading a year below grade level and has been referred to the reading resource teacher in the school. Blue is another sixth grade student who is working below

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grade level in reading and displaying behavior that has been disruptive in his regular classroom. Enrique, a limited English speaker, is a third grade student from Mexico. Under Blue's careful and concerned cross-peer tutoring Enrique is reading at a second grade level in English after a four-month period. Both Blue and John have improved their reading scores by at least a year in the last four months as cross-peer tutors. Is this a miracle? No, it is a successful cross-peer tutoring program.

At its most basic level, peer tutoring is students teaching other students, usually on a one-to-one basis. The term "peer tutoring" has been used in the literature to describe situations in which one person provides instructional assistance and guidance to another person (Cohen, Kirk and Dickson, 1972). Cross-peer tutoring involves students learning through helping each other as an alternative to the traditional system of learning through competing with each other. Cross-peer tutoring makes the acquisition of knowledge and skills valuable, not in the service of competition for grades but as a means for personally significant interaction with others (Gartner, Kohler and Riessman, 1971).

The process of peer tutoring is certainly not a new concept. Children have been helping other children for as long as people have banded together with common goals (Ehly and Larsen, 1980). The roots of peer tutoring can be traced back to the developing needs of societies to educate their young in the necessary tasks that guarantee the continuation of the group. In ancient times, the concern of a group of individuals was with the survival and the maintenance of physiological needs (Bateson, 1972). In more recent history, with the development of formal systems devoted to the education of children and youth, emphasis has shifted to training students to meet the cognitive and affective demands of a larger society.

Children have taught other children has throughout the recorded history of mankind. The first image that comes to mind is that of the little red schoolhouse that was staffed by one dedicated teacher. As a result of having a variety of students to instruct, the teacher frequently relied on the older or more intelligent students to work with other students. When one teacher was hired to work with the children of an entire settlement or town, the teacher would often rely on certain students to teach others. The arrangements seem to have been successful; many of our leaders came from such schools.

Modern day equivalents to those one-room experiments in learning have developed with many of the same economic and educational justifications that motivated these earlier classroom activities. What could be closer to the little one-room schoolhouse than the ESL classroom?

RATIONALE

Traditional modes of learning in our schools have placed emphasis on individualizing instruction. Self-paced and computerized instructional programs are designed with the individual student in mind. Traditional grading systems and honor rolls foster competition. The spotlight in education has been on both the way students interact with material and on the role of the teacher. Competitive and individualized learning situations focus on "getting it right." These approaches to learning are outcome rather than process oriented (Pierce, Stahlbrand and Armstrong, 1984).

In cross-peer tutoring, the focus is on learning as a cooperative undertaking and the process as well as the outcome is addressed. Students working together in helping relationships share not answers but the processes used to derive the answers.

As teachers, we are directly responsible for young people making the transition to adulthood. Our youth should have the opportunity for undertaking responsibilities that affect the lives of other people. Through experiences such as cross-peer tutoring, students learn the kind of behavior required of socially responsible adults. The opportunity to be involved in helping relationships has traditionally not been available in our schools (Gillette, 1968).

Cross-peer tutoring can have rewards that extend beyond the term of any specific project and beyond the obvious goals of increased student achievement or productivity. Students working together may complete a specified assignment and acquire valuable interpersonal skills as well. Effective genuine communication skills are central to the success of a cross-peer tutoring program. The latest research in second language acquisition theory focuses on genuine communication (Morley, 1983). A cross-peer tutoring program based on genuine communication skills in any school situation where minority language students need ESL instruction can be developed.

A CROSS-PEER TUTORING PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL READING STUDENTS AND ESL STUDENTS

The special reading students involved in this cross-peer tutoring project were fifth and sixth grade students who were reading at least one year below grade level. They had been referred to a reading specialist, but they were not special education students. The tutors were chosen according to the following criteria:

- Exhibits helping behaviors
- Can be well-liked
- Desires to tutor
- Completes all class work and has a recommendation from the

regular classroom teacher.
- Possesses a skill level above that of the skill being imparted
- Considers peer tutoring a privilege and honor

The ESL students involved in the project were students enrolled in grades one through six. The students ranged from beginning to intermediate levels of English proficiency. The ESL students were divided into two categories. The first were those students who had no English skills at all and were assigned a tutor to give them a time to listen to the language. This allowed the ESL student a safe silent period (Krashen, 1982). The second category of ESL student was the intermediate student who needed to work on a specific academic or social skill and could be paired with a native English-speaking student who also needed that same skill reinforcement. In order to qualify as tutees in the cross-peer tutoring program the ESL student must have demonstrated the following:

- Willingness to be helped
- Desire to grow
- Good behavior

The cross-peer tutoring program was implemented after both student populations had been tested. The reading students were given either the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test or the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test. The ESL students were given the Bilingual Syntax Measure and The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The ESL students were not tested if they were beginning level students. The tests were given for screening and placement. It was necessary to measure the progress in reading and language acquisition could be measured and to determine which skills should be attacked in the cross-peer tutoring sessions. After the testing process the tutors were trained and then paired with their tutees.

The peer tutoring sessions ranged between thirty and forty-five minutes. Sometimes the tutors opted to give up their recesses in order to devote more time to their tutees. The sessions were divided into three parts. The tutor read to the tutee for the first ten minutes; the tutor was responsible for choosing and practicing the selection. The tutor was to have selected material that would be of interest to the tutee. The next ten minutes were given to skill practice in the tutor's low achievement area. The tutor was given a worksheet or project in that low area and the assignment of teaching that skill to the tutee. The last ten minutes were used for evaluation. All of the tutors kept journals as part of the evaluation process. Every day each tutor noted in the journal what had been accomplished that day, how the tutor felt about the session and what the plans were for the next session. The content, spelling and handwriting improved daily in the journals.

Among good sources discovered for the ESL student were the

HOLA booklet, Live Action English for Foreign Students and Dr. Seuss books. Various reading kits that enabled specific isolated skill area work such as Bowmar-Noble and Barnell Loft were also utilized.

The scheduling of the tutoring sessions had to be coordinated with the mainstream/homeroom teacher, the reading teacher, the ESL teacher, PE, the library, the fluoride program, the music program, the swimming program, the safety patrol, school assemblies, fire drills and fire prevention programs, lunch room workers, the Nevada Opera Guild, ice cream sales, bus schedules, the M.S. Read-a-Thon, class movies, a child abuse program conducted by the Police Department, counseling pull-outs, holidays, and a ski program.

As the program has developed and grown changes in the organization have been made. The most important is that the tutors have taken over much of the lesson planning. The oral reading period has been dropped completely as that time was needed in other areas of the program. The students want to spend their time on the skill areas. Considerable time has been spent comparing and contrasting languages, the students going so far as to write bilingual dictionaries.

Some of the advanced ESL students have asked to become tutors and have been assigned to the new non-English-speaking students entering the ESL program. This has worked out well because those advanced ESL students being assigned the role of tutor have been through the program, know the procedure and the problems of being the "new kid on the block."

Another variation on the original plan of this program is that some mainstream teachers have requested that other students participate in the program. Some students have needed reinforcement in one skill area; for instance, one student needed help with dictionary skills. A second grade advanced level ESL student who was working on dictionary skills was located and the two were paired up and worked together two days a week for a forty-five-minute period each session. The regular classroom teachers have also requested tutoring time for the native English-speaking students who are working well above grade level. These students have been assigned as math and computer tutors for the ESL students.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of a cross-peer tutoring program between under-achieving native English-speaking students and non-English-speaking students are

- to improve the self-image of the shy student
- to understand a student different from oneself
- to develop an awareness of individual differences

- to create positive attitudes toward self and others
- to develop a sense of responsibility

Because the program is designed for two populations, an understanding of the goals for each is critical to its overall success. The goals for the below grade level reading student are

- to make learning more attractive to below-grade-level achievers
- to improve attitudes toward school and reading
- to allow students to see that there are many ways to be acceptably out of the mainstream population

The goals for the non-English speaking students include the following:

- to allow the NEP/LEP student a silent period
- to allow students a non-threatening learning atmosphere
- to appreciate and care for the native English speaker
- to establish trust in an English-speaking society
- to remove social stigma attached to a pull-out program

The objectives for the reading student are such that

- by nine weeks the tutor will be fluent in required oral reading material
- by six weeks the tutor will complete a contract
- by the end of one semester of cross-peer tutoring the tutor will attain one year's growth in reading level

> Objective for the non-English speaking student is that by the end of a nine week peer tutoring session the student will score at 2-1/2 years on the oral Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (thus allowing the ESL student to enter a language experience reading program). (Moustafa, 1985)

TUTOR TRAINING

Tutor training is an essential element in the cross-peer tutoring program. Merely bringing two students together and calling one a cross-peer tutor will not obtain good results. The role of the tutor must be highly structured. The tutor training was the assignment of the reading specialist, while the ESL teacher was given the assignment of providing the specific assignments to be utilized during the tutoring sessions.

In the training sessions the tutors were trained in methodology and content. The tutors were taught learning principles as a systematic way to teach and assess. Tutors were given these guidelines (Pierce, Stahlbrand and Armstrong, 1984):

1. Establish rapport with the tutee. (The tutors were given a short written biography

of the tutee to help break the ice and start the process of rapport building.)

2. Secure the tutee's attention.

3. Give clear instructions, letting the tutee know precisely the response expected. (It was difficult getting the tutor to realize that there would be times when not a word would be understood.)

4. Give a straightforward presentation of the new material.

5. Praise the tutee for a correct response or action (in the case of Total Physical Response.) (Asher, 1977).

6. Correct the tutee by:

   a. modeling the correct answer
   b. saying the answer to the tutee
   c. requiring the tutee to say the answer alone

7. Avoid punishing.

8. Stay on task and pace the lesson at a reasonable speed.

9. Use specific criteria to judge when an objective has been mastered.

10. Use a consistent system of reinforcement in the form of verbal praise and stickers.

11. Keep accurate records in the form of a journal.

A good way to give the tutors incentive was to increase the visibility of their "teacher role." This was done by assigning them to be the official tutors for specific ESL students. The tutors carried their journals with them, which was also a visible badge of their official capacity as tutor. The tutors were also rewarded for their hard work and dedication to their assigned tutees with an end-of-the-year festivity. The first year it was an American bar-b-que pot luck. Can you imagine that some children do not like S'mores and that others would turn down sushi, kimchi or tamales? The bar-b-que was a class project which required a tremendous amount of planning and was quite successful, not only as a fun outing but as a content-based lesson. The second year, the two classes were given tickets to the circus and made plans for that venture which

required getting to school on a Saturday, making lunch arrangements and getting to the circus and back on a city bus.

BENEFITS FOR THE NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING TUTEE

Research findings have shown consistently that students do make significant academic gains after being tutored by other students (Pierce, Stahlband and Armstrong, 1984). The benefits for the non-English-speaking student acting as a tutee in a cross-peer tutoring program fall into four basic categories.

The first benefit is increased individualized attention. Peer-tutoring is the classic example of a one-to-one teaching situation where the material to be learned can be closely matched to the learner's level on a sequence of skills. By working one-to-one with a peer the non-English speaking tutee is put in a situation that encourages a low affective filter (Dulay and Burt, 1977). There is not the anxiety of the "classroom" pressures of having to speak before the class, making mistakes and being laughed at or ridiculed. The Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) states that when communication is successful, when input is understood, and when there is enough of it, $i + 1$ will be provided automatically. This is a component which is inherent in the process of cross-peer tutoring. The tutee receives comprehensible input because the tutor is determined, as only a child can be, that the tutee is going to learn his or her lesson. A sixth grade student is not aware of the structure of language and has no option except to go for meaning.

The second benefit to the tutee is closer contact with the instructor resulting in increased learning efficiency. The social interaction that occurs in cross-peer tutoring affects learning. A bond of friendship develops between the tutor and the tutee which enhances the instructional situation (Pierce, Stahlbrand and Armstrong, 1984). This bond of friendship and social interaction will insure comprehensible input by lowering the affective filter because of the element of trust inherent in a friendship. The tutee will not feel the need to use the Monitor and, thus, will insure his or her own acquisition of the second language. Because children are able to communicate more effectively with other children than adults can communicate with children, and because older students make simpler and shorter statements when speaking with younger students than do adults (Schatz and Gelman, 1973), the older students are able to supply comprehensible input naturally; therefore, tutors speak along a register which will allow the tutees the comprehensible input plus one ($i + 1$) that is required to acquire the target language.

A third benefit to the tutee is the influence that a role model can have. A student being tutored will imitate the tutor and, in our case, not only the language but also the behavior. The tutee has an American role model and has help in becoming

acculturated. When the tutee needs assistance in school situations which require the cultural subtlety of a native, the tutor is a source to be utilized.

The fourth benefit for the tutee is gains in self esteem. In one-to-one situations, native English-speaking students will vocalize inquisitiveness about cultures and languages different from their own. The tutees take pride not only in answering those questions but in sharing artifacts, food, and language. Since age is associated with valued characteristics such as size and strength, the younger child stands to gain in self concept from association with an older child working in the "teacher" role (Lohman, 1970). The tutee, by seeing a child in a teacher role, sees that a child does have something to offer and can be an important person.

BENEFITS FOR THE TUTOR

By having to teach other students, the tutors are able to enhance their own academic abilities. The tutors in this program have gained a deeper understanding of skill areas in which they were weak; in some instances, the students have increased their own reading scores by two years.

The tutors, by being associated with the prestigious role of teacher, have increased their own self-esteem and created positive attitudes toward school. Parents of the tutors have visited the school and attended conferences, some for the first time since these students had been labeled "remedial." Not only has the tutoring experience raised the students' self-esteem but the esteem of their parents. Positive changes in social behavior, attitudes and self-concept occur.

In order for the tutee to develop successfully in a teaching situation certain social skills are necessary. Social and interpersonal skills are rarely the focus of classroom instruction but are very essential in dealing with people. Tutors are taught how to give constructive criticism. They are also shown the value of praise.

Another benefit for the tutor is that of being placed in a helping relationship. The tutors have feelings of increased personal competence. They develop an awareness and an acceptance of those students who are different from themselves. The tutors in this program have developed an awareness of cultural differences and a sensitivity toward those differences.

Although benefits for tutors and tutees are important reasons for implementing partner teaching/learning programs, the major recipient of benefits is often the teacher or resource teacher. The areas of major benefit include: (1) insuring that mastery learning occurs for individuals within a pre-specified skills sequence; (2) promoting partnerships among instructional

personnel, as in team teaching or consultation; (3) increasing individualized attention for low-performing students; (4) enhancing opportunities for gifted students; (5) creating positive interpersonal attitudes within the classroom; and (6) providing a cost-effective alternative for increasing student productivity and improving interpersonal relationships. (Pierce, Stahlband and Armstrong, 1984).

In conclusion, both research and practical experience show that the cross-peer tutoring process has been effective for such students and their teachers.

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